

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 047539

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UG, US, AEMR, CASC

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON UGANDA

REF: STATE 44432

1. AT FEBRUARY 22 SESSION OF UGANDA HEARINGS, JOINT SUB-COMMITTEES OF HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE HEARD TESTIMONY OF FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO UGANDA THOMAS MELADY, FORMER UGANDAN ATTORNEY GENERAL GODFREY BINAISA, AND EAST AFRICAN SCHOLAR ALI MAZRUI (KENYAN NATIONAL, FORMERLY ON FACULTY OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY IN KAMPALA, NOW AT U. OF MICHIGAN).

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2. OVERALL THRUST OF TESTIMONY BY WITNESSES AND QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT WAS TO REIN-FORCE PICTURE DRAWN AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF UGANDAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AS INVOLVING ATROCITIES VERGING ON GENOCIDE (NOT PRECISELY DEFINED) FOR WHICH IDI AMIN MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE, AND WHICH WARRANT STRONG

U.S. ACTIONS INCLUDING ECONOMIC EMBARGO. ANALOGY WITH HITLER WAS REPEATEDLY CITED BY BOTH WITNESSES AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

3. WITNESSES DISAGREED OVER DEGREE TO WHICH ATROCITIES IN UGANDA HAVE BEEN COMMITTED UNDER AMIN'S PERSONAL DIRECTION (MAZRUI ARGUED THAT UGANDAN SITUATION COMBINES TYRANNY AND ANARCHY, WITH LATTER PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR GREATER NUMBER OF DEATHS; OTHER WITNESSES ARGUED AMIN PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTIONS LEADING TO VAST MAJORITY OF KILLINGS). HOWEVER, ALL WITNESSES AGREED THAT AMIN'S DEPARTURE FROM THE SCENE WAS NECESSARY PREREQUISITE FOR SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT OF CONDITIONS IN UGANDA (WITH MELADY AND BINAISA CONSIDERABLY MORE SANGUINE THAN MAZRUI THAT IMPROVEMENT WOULD QUICKLY FOLLOW AMIN'S REMOVAL). MELADY STRONGLY URGED THAT U.S. USE ALL "LEGAL" MEANS TOWARDS THIS END. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, MELADY AND BINAISA EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD FOLLOW U.S. LEAD IN ESTABLISHING A COFFEE EMBARGO, AND THAT SUCH AN EMBARGO WOULD HAVE DIRECT AND SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IN HASTENING DOWNFALL OF AMIN REGIME.

4. LINE OF QUESTIONING BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ AS TO WHY UGANDANS HAD NOT TO DATE SUCCEEDED IN OVERTHROWING AMIN OR EVEN ORGANIZING SIGNIFICANT LIBERATION MOVEMENT ELICITED RESPONSE BY BINAISA THAT TRADITIONAL UGANDAN

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OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY COMBINED WITH GOVERNMENT MONOPOLY ON POSSESSION OF FIREARMS RENDERED CONCERTED FORCIBLE OPPOSITION TO REGIME VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. SOLARZ ALSO ASKED WHETHER VIOLENCE IN UGANDA WAS INDISCRIMINATE OR FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON ONE OR MORE DEFINABLE CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE; WITNESSES GENERALLY CONCURRED THAT ALTHOUGH CERTAIN GROUPS (E.G. ACHOLI AND LANGI) HAD SUFFERED MORE THAN OTHERS, VIOLENCE WAS ESSENTIALLY ACROSS-THE-BOARD IN NATURE.

5. BINAISA AND MELADY BOTH DISCOUNTED DANGER TO AMERICAN RESIDENTS AS ARGUMENT AGAINST STRONG U.S. ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS UGANDA. CONGRESSMAN PEASE ENTERED INTO RECORD LETTERS FROM U.S. RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING PROPOSED EMBARGO AGAINST UGANDA, AND RESPONSES TO HIS CIRCULAR TO MISSIONARY ORGANIZATIONS WITH PERSONNEL IN UGANDA INCLUDING ONE WHICH OBJECTED TO STATE DEPARTMENT USE OF MISSIONARIES AS "PAWNS" OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

6. CONGRESSMAN PEASE ASKED BINAISA AND MELADY THEIR VIEW OF POSSIBLE INVESTIGATION OF UGANDAN SITUATION BY BODY SUCH AS UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (UNHRC) OR INTERNATIONAL-

AL COMMISSION OF JURISTS (ICJ). BOTH URGED THAT ANY UNHRC INVESTIGATION AT A MINIMUM INCLUDE ICJ EXPERT PERSONNEL IN VIEW OF SUBSTANTIAL WORK ALREADY DONE BY ICJ ON UGANDAN CASE. BOTH ALSO ARGUED THAT FACTS OF UGANDAN SITUATION ARE SUFFICIENTLY WELL ESTABLISHED ALREADY TO JUSTIFY PUNITIVE ACTIONS; BINAISA IN PARTICULAR STRONGLY URGED THAT POSSIBILITY OF UNHRC INVESTIGATION OF UGANDAN

HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS NOT BE ALLOWED TO DELAY CONSIDERATION OF U.S. BOYCOTT, VIEW WITH WHICH CONGRESSMAN PEASE EXPRESSED AGREEMENT.

7. MAZRUI TESTIMONY STRESSED A NUMBER OF ACTIONS HE BELIEVED ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDE "MORAL CREDIBILITY" FOR ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHER U.S. MEASURES AGAINST UGANDA. THESE INCLUDED: "COMPARABLE" ACTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA; GENEROSITY VIS-A-VIS UGANDAN REFUGEES; AND AN OFFER OF RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO UGANDA ONCE CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS AND CIVILIAN RULE ARE RESTORED. BINAISA STRONGLY OPPOSED ANY SOUTH AFRICA LINK TO U.S. ACTION ON UGANDA.

8. UGANDAN CHARGE AGAIN PRESENT THROUGHOUT SESSION.

9. NO FURTHER HEARINGS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED OR ANTICIPATED. WE ANTICIPATE NEXT STEP WILL BE EXECUTIVE SESSION OF SUBCOMMITTEES TO DISCUSS FINDINGS AND CONSIDER WHAT IF ANY PROPOSAL TO PRESENT TO FULL COMMITTEE. (NOTE: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAS JURISDICTION ONLY OVER BILL PROPOSING EXPORT EMBARGO AGAINST UGANDA; WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE, WHICH HAS JURISDICTION OVER IMPORT EMBARGO BILLS, HAS YET TO SCHEDULE HEARINGS OR CONSIDERATION OF THESE BILLS.) VANCE

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